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INTERPRETATIONS OF GERMAN POETRY (1939 - 1956)

A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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In the last two decades a remarkable change has taken place in the approach to the study of German literature. More and more the *interpretation* of specific works, and particularly of poems, has gained in importance; the many studies on individual poems which have appeared in American and European publications during these years are a distinct expression of this trend. Since, however, these interpretations have by now become so numerous and are so widely dispersed as to be almost inaccessible when needed, it seemed desirable to gather this body of material and arrange it in a form that would make it readily available. The bibliography here presented is intended to serve the practical purpose of supplying teachers and students of German poetry with a reference tool that will enable them to locate interpretations of specific poems which have been published by scholars and critics here and abroad.

Because of the practical aspect which the compilers of the bibliography had in mind, certain limits have been decided upon. The chronological starting point was the year 1939. This may seem somewhat arbitrary; it should, however, be noted that 1939 was the year in which Emil Staiger's *Die Zeit als Einbildungskraft des Dichters* appeared, a book which has become one of the landmarks of the new interpretative movement. In general, the years before 1939 yielded relatively little in the way of interpretations as we understand them today, for whatever was found usually had a rather different approach, dealing primarily with problems of biography, origin, or literary influences. Nevertheless, a few of these earlier studies have been included, particularly in cases where the same poem later has been discussed again by other scholars, and such an inclusion might help to complete the history of the critical treatment of a certain important poem.

The compilers had some difficulties in arriving at a working definition of the term "interpretation." They understand by it, at least for the purposes of this bibliography, a critical, self-contained discussion of a poem, dealing with as many single facets and aspects of it as possible

and aiming at an understanding of it as a whole. The fact that they have not included biographies and comprehensive treatments of a specific author, but limited themselves to listings of single, independent interpretations of individual poems, is therefore not simply due to the restrictions of space, as imperative as these were, nor to the fact that works of the biographical type usually are easily accessible and the first sources to be consulted. More important was the circumstance that it often is extremely difficult, and sometimes even impossible, within the framework of a larger study, to distinguish between a true interpretation and a possibly lengthy discussion of one or several aspects of a given poem. In contrast to an independent interpretation, a book usually places a poem in a specific biographical, philosophical, aesthetic, or historical context which is a prerequisite for the later discussion of it. This means that the discussion of a specific poem cannot be separated from the context in which it appears, and that an attempt to do this nevertheless may actually distort the intention of the author. Also, a biography may very well discuss a certain poem at twenty different places, but all these references put together will not necessarily make a true interpretation.

For the same reason all motif studies and comparative investigations of the type of *Das Thema der Nacht in der deutschen Lyrik*, or *Vier Brunnengedichte*, or studies such as Erich Hock's *Motivgleiche Gedichte* have been excluded, because often the presentation of one aspect of the poem rather than a complete interpretation was the main object of the author. Only in a few cases where two poems of the same theme were compared with each other, an exception was made, and then only when each poem was discussed independently enough to make its discussion a meaningful interpretation.

In general, articles in a foreign language which the teacher of German normally does not handle sufficiently well were not listed, for instance Papatzones' articles on Hölderlin, published in modern Greek. A search of the literary journals of the Soviet Zone of Germany did not yield much. Quite obviously, their interest is focused upon the sociological aspects of literature, to the detriment of the interpretative approach.

The bibliography is arranged according to the authors of the poems. The essays are listed alphabetically by title or the first line of the poem (the article being treated as part of the title). If several interpretations of one poem are listed, they are arranged in the order of their publication. Since the title of the essay and the title of the poem discussed are often identical, it seemed unnecessary to cite the exact title of the essay or interpretation.

The bibliography covers the period from 1939 to 1956; a few items, however, published early in 1957 have been included. In general the abbreviations of the journals listed follow the "Annual Bibliography" of the *PMLA*, LXXII (April, 1957), 135-146. A few additional abbrevia-

tions for books or journals which are not listed or abbreviated in *PMLA* are used for reasons of economy:

- DDL* *Die deutsche Lyrik*, 2 Bde., hrsg. von Benno von Wiese, (Düsseldorf, 1956).
FaG *Freude am Gedicht*, zwölf Deutungen. Albrecht Goes, (Frankfurt, 1952).
GLP *German Lyric Poetry*, a critical analysis of selected poems from Klopstock to Rilke. S. S. Prawer, (London, 1952).
GuG *Gedicht und Gedanke*. Auslegungen deutscher Gedichte, hrsg. von Heinz Otto Burger, (Halle, 1942).
IML *Interpretationen moderner Lyrik*, hrsg. vom Bayerischen Philologenverband, Fachgruppe Deutsch-Geschichte. (Frankfurt a. M. — Berlin — Bonn, 1954).
LdG *Liebe zum deutschen Gedicht*. Wilhelm Schneider. (Freiburg i. Br., 1952).
Mbe *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, (University of Wisconsin).
WzG *Wege zum Gedicht*, hrsg. von Rupert Hirschenauer und Albrecht Weber, (München und Zürich, 1956).
ZfAesth *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*
ZfDk *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*
ZDU *Zeitschrift für deutschen Unterricht*

Bachmann

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Borchardt

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Brecht

Erinnerung an die Marie A.: Albrecht Schöne, *DDL*, II, 485-494.

Legende von der Entstehung des Buches Taoteking auf dem Weg des
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81-86.

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Auf dem Rhein: Emil Staiger, *Die Zeit als Einbildungskraft des
Dichters*, (Zürich, 1939), 23-98.

Der Spinnerin Lied: S. S. Prawer, *GLP*, 121-126.

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Bröger

Bekenntnis: Hermann Pongs, *GuG*, 418-421.

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Claudius, Hermann

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Deutsche Literatur unter dem Hammer

Im vergangenen Mai fand in der Galerie Gerd Rosen, Berlin, eine besonders interessante Auktion statt. Der reichbebilderte Katalog umfaßte 2391 Nummern. Ein großer Teil der Bücher und Autographen stammten aus dem Besitz des Sammlers und Bibliophilen Otto Deneke. Deneke ist letztes Jahr in Göttingen gestorben und hinterließ eine Sammlung von Originalausgaben von Lessing bis zur Romantik. Die Briefe von Rudolf Borchardt und O. E. Hartleben, die zur Versteigerung kamen, waren an ihn gerichtet.

Die Borchardtbriefe enthalten eingehende Schilderungen seines Besuchs bei Hofmannsthal und Beer-Hofmann. Sie erzielten hohe Preise, nämlich über die Schätzwerte von 60.—, 100.— und 120.— hinaus 65.—, 285.— und 175.—. Danach erzielte Fontane sehr hohe Preise. Die vollständige Sammlung der Briefe an Paul Heyse, 97 Stücke, brachte 2500.— statt der geschätzten 1600.—. Fünfzehn davon sind unveröffentlicht. Der unveröffentlichte Entwurf zu einer Novelle *Koegels-Hof Nummer drei. Expropriert. (Enteignet). Roßstraße 13* erreichte Zuschlag für 650.— statt der geschätzten 350.—. Der ebenfalls unveröffentlichte Anfang einer Erzählung *Rudolf von Jagorski. Globetrotter* brachte 420.— (statt 180.—). Ein Brief an seine Frau stieg sogar auf den dreifachen Wert: 120.— statt 40.—. Goethenana waren nicht sehr hoch. Überraschend hoch aber ein kurzes Stammbuchblatt auf lateinisch und spanisch von Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau: 320.— statt 250.—. Briefe der Eltern Theodor Körners, teilweise über ihre freundschaftlichen Beziehungen zur Familie Humboldt, erreichten 100.— und 90.— (80.— und 40.—). Ein Brief Jean Pauls stieg auf das Doppelte, von 100.— auf 200.—. Ein Auktionsauftrag Schopenhauers mit dem einzigen groben Satz: "Wenn Sie die Preise überschreiten, erhalten Sie die Bücher zurück" erzielte Zuschlag für 340.— (250.—). Drei Manuskripte von D. F. Strauß stiegen von 240.— Schätzwert auf 320.—. Interessant ist, wie hoch bereits Briefe von Else Lasker-Schüler (55.— über 40.—) und Karl Wolfskehl (42.— und 32.— statt 30.— und 24.—) bewertet werden. Auch die Weltgeschichte hat ihre eigene Bewertung: ein französischer Brief Friedrichs des Großen stieg von 500.— auf 590.—, ein Vierzeilen-Billet von Rasputin ergab 330.— statt 180.—, während ein Höflichkeitsbrief Hindenburgs mit 20.— statt der geschätzten 40.— abging.

Aus der Romantik mögen folgende Preise angeführt sein: die große erste Gesamtausgabe in 22 Bänden der Werke Arnims war auf 800.— geschätzt worden und erzielte Zuschlag für 1010.—, während einzelne Erst- und Frühausgaben recht billig ersteigert wurden: *Wunderhorn* (1806) 110.— statt 80.—, alle 37 Nummern von *Trösteinsamkeit* (1808) 240.— statt 250.—, die Erstausgabe des *Wintergartens* (1809) brachte nur 21.— statt der geschätzten 24.—, *Halle und Jerusalem* (Erstausgabe 1811) 21.— statt 20.—, und dasselbe in der Ausgabe von 1846 18.— statt 16.—, *Isabella von Ägypten* (1812) 38.— statt 34.— und schließlich die Erstausgabe des ersten Bandes der *Kronenwächter* (1817) 41.— statt 36.—.

— W. V.

KAFKA'S "DER LANDARZT"

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"Der Landarzt," for all its brevity, is an abundant source of Kafkaan symbolism. The symbols are often rather rich in interpretive possibilities, and for this reason it will be most profitable, as soon as I proceed to the specific consideration of the story, to follow the method of *explication de texte*. The symbols may be interpreted on at least two levels, biographical and/or Freudian.¹ The biographical level is in terms of Kafka's known attitudes and symbology. The Freudian level has two parts: first, the obvious Freudian symbology, and second, most interestingly, the frequent use of this Freudian material as documentation for Kafka's pronounced anti-Freud thesis in "Der Landarzt."

"Der Landarzt," however, does not prove quite so nicely subject to Freudian interpretation as certain *Novellen* of Schnitzler.² I shall not try to reduce each symbol to a single interpretation, since the multi-symbolic representations are quite valid psychologically. Some symbols may well resist definitive explication,³ but we may nonetheless expect some significant interpretive results.

Before we begin with the interpretation proper, we must make the following two assumptions.

1. Kafka's attitude toward his father was mostly of hate and slightly of respect and fear.⁴

2. Kafka knew of Freud, of psychoanalysis and its applicability to his own case, but he was opposed to Freud's materialistically and scientifically slanted method of explaining the essence of conflict. Freud, for all his awareness of humanism, and for all his adoption by humanists, remained for Kafka a product of the inexorable scientific materialism of the late nineteenth century. So also Freud's contribution, psychoanalysis.⁵

¹ Concerning the relationship of Kafka to Freud, and especially the question of the impropriety of saying that Kafka uses "freudian symbols," see Selma Fraiberg, "Kafka and the Dream," *Partisan Review*, XXIII (1956), 49-50. See also Max Brod, "Kafka: Father and Son," *PR*, IV (1938), 21-22; Theodor Adorno, "Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka," *Die Neue Rundschau*, LXIV (1953), 325-353, esp. pp. 328-332 - this includes comment on Kafka's "Zum letztenmal Psychologie;" Hans Schoeps, "Theologische Motive in der Dichtung Franz Kafkas," *NR*, LXII (1, 1951), 21-37. "Der Landarzt" could be equally well interpreted on a third level - the influence of Kierkegaard on Kafka, but I have limited myself in this article to developing the Freudian aspect.

² Cf. Victor A. Oswald, Jr. and Veronica Mindess, "Schnitzler's 'Fräulein Else' and the Psychoanalytic Theory of Neuroses," *GR*, XXVI (1951), 279-288.

³ As stated by Max Bense, *Die Theorie Kafkas* (Köln-Berlin, 1952), p. 77: "Infolge des Zerfalls klassischer Seinsethematik und eines Zerfalls der Modelle (als klassischer Literaturthematik) wird Kafkas Literatur nicht nur vieldeutig und schwerdeutig, sie wird in vielen Zügen jeder Deutung sogar unzugänglich, unausdeutbar."

⁴ "Brief an meinen Vater."

⁵ "Zum letztenmal Psychologie," and *Briefe an Milena*, letter headed "Mittwoch," Brod ed., p. 112.

We may regard the whole story of "Der Landarzt" as in the context of a dream, so full is it of dream symbology. But who is this *Landarzt*, this country doctor summoned by the night bell to such a dream-like mission? First, like Gregor Samsa, like K., like most heroes of Kafka, this country doctor is Kafka himself. In addition, however, he seems to be the image of a psychoanalyst.⁶ This image we will keep in mind during our investigation.

We find the *Landarzt* in a critical dilemma (*Verlegenheit*), which seems to reflect his more or less chronic state of dilemma. The weight of Kafka interpretation, led by Max Brod, would interpret the dilemma as Kafkan man's inadequacy, but not hopelessness, in the face of a collapsing world.⁷ The critical dilemma of the country doctor is caused by the ringing of the night bell, followed by the doctor's discovery that his horse is missing. That is, the doctor has not enough faith, a quality popularly associated with horses. And what faith the doctor used to have has died because of over-tension (*Überanstrengung*). How is the doctor to get a new horse? There is no sense, he feels, in trying to get one in the village. In other words, where is he to rediscover faith, since the faith of this world is far from being as great as it must be, and in fact is false. It is false because it is oriented to scientific materialism. But the doctor must have a horse; he must make his call. His district is utterly dependent on him. Yet he has found it hard, really impossible, to come to an understanding with people. We may take this lack of rapport between the doctor and his world as a sign that Kafka could not tolerate a world which sought cures for its ills from psychoanalysts, who in any case would be incapable of understanding—either the ills or the real cures.

The country doctor, tormented and distraught by his dilemma, kicks in the side of an old pigpen. The symbology is quite clear. Kafka renounces weak or spurious Judaism and reaffirms the revival of his own enthusiastic Judaism. For who but Gentiles or assimilated Jews would keep pigs? Now the psychoanalytic circle, with a very few notable exceptions, was composed of Jews—but not Judaizers. And Freud's scorn of religious Judaism is well-known.

But in this unlikely stable, this pigpen, is what the doctor has most need of right now, a team of horses, faith. Their emergence through the narrow opening of the pigpen can signify the birth of faith—of a sort. Maybe these not wholly equine horses will prove sufficient to take the doctor to his patient and return him comfortably to his house,

⁶ It is during the twenties that the psychoanalyst begins to rival the country doctor as a character in modern fiction—for example in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, in Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Island Within*, and in Waldo Frank's *The Bridegroom Cometh*.

⁷ Albert Camus, *Le mythe de Sisyphe* (Paris, 1942), pp. 173-189, and Hans Schoeps, "Theologische Motive in der Dichtung Franz Kafkas," might prefer to cast the doctor as a representative of messianism in an eschatology without hope.

although they, like Kafka's faith, have already been contaminated from their contact with the Gentile, or assimilated world, the pigpen.⁸ The unnatural circumstance of their appearance casts doubt on the genuineness of their faith and of their help. We may prefer to consider both pigs and horses as totems representing kinds of faith. The pigs — unclean, self-satisfied, materialistic; the horses — fractious, abnormal, and in this case, also unclean. In the end they help destroy the doctor.

This initial concern with animals — pigs and horses — has further symbolic relevance. It sets the tone for the action to follow, much of which is at an animal level. Kafka's characters behave as animals; there is a lack of human control over situations. We shall see this, for example, in the doctor's groom, i.e. his double, and in fact in the doctor himself, who in the end is stripped of his clothes — his human layer — and is quite at the mercy of his horses.

An unpleasant, crouching man emerges from the pigpen along with the horses. He is the doctor's double, the side of him which has no faith and no morality. As Brod states, the double (in general) is "ein äußerst interessantes dichterisches Mittel Kafkas."⁹ So it is here. The loathsome double is Kafka's means of representing the unreal in terms of the real. The double is comparable to the bug that Gregor Samsa turns into in "Die Verwandlung." Like Samsa, this double is on all fours. Like Samsa, he is afraid that he is an object of loathing.

Even as the doctor looks on, the repugnant groom, his double, bites the servant-girl, Rosa. This is a literary echo of Freudian "repression." For the doctor's inability to achieve what he wants — understanding with the world and with Rosa — is the source of what I will now venture to call his mental illness. Like Kafka, he is a neurotic. The doctor cries "Du Vieh" at the uncouth fellow, but drops his whip when he reflects that no other help is to be had with the unruly horses. Everyone else has failed him. But the groom takes no offense, "als wisse er von meinen Gedanken." Of course he knows the doctor's thoughts — he *is* the doctor's thoughts.

"Kutschieren aber will ich," says the doctor. With this resolution, his double, the groom, is delighted: ". . . ich bleibe bei Rosa." Thus the dream-censor is satisfied, and at the same time the id is placated. Rosa, suspecting her inevitable fate, flees to the house and locks herself in. At the groom's clap, the uncanny team dashes off with the doctor, who hears the door of his house burst and splinter under the groom's assault. The house is a basic Freudian symbol for the human body, in this case Rosa's. Rosa, prey to the double, is lost forever to the doctor. He has taken her too much for granted: "von mir kaum beachtet." Now she is lost, and he cannot get back to her. That is to say, return in

⁸ Kafka wrote "Der Landarzt" before the love affair with Milena, the denouement of which, her married status aside, confirms Kafka's intransigent Judaism.

⁹ Max Brod, *Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre* (Winterthur, 1948), p. 130.

general is impossible, decisions are irrevocable, and life, being ruthless, waits for no one. If that is so, then of what possible use is a psychoanalyst; or, if there is a role for him, how tiny it must be.

Suddenly the doctor is at his destination, speeded by the compression of time in the manifest dream. But he cannot understand — again, this inability to understand — the “verwirrten Reden” of the patient’s parents and sister. These are portmanteau dream words, not subject to logic or understanding. They symbolize the incomprehensibility of the world to the doctor.

The patient, a boy, whispers into the doctor’s ear: “Doktor, laß mich sterben.” Kafka believed that the wish to die was a first sign of perceptiveness (Erkenntnis). The patient, perceiving the world and the sad state of its faith, is not ashamed to want to die. This is not at all the same as Freud’s idea that the goal of all life is death. Rather, if we consider the basis of the death wish, Kafka’s concept is quite opposed to Freud’s — “perceptivism” versus determinism.

The doctor permits himself the blasphemous thought: “In solchen Fällen helfen die Götter, schenken das fehlende Pferd.” Why should Kafka call this thought “blasphemous”? Because it imputes to the gods the meanness of vouchsafing us artificial and improper, that is, worldly means to faith; they help us to false hope. In *Das Schloß* K. at least succeeds in getting to the first *Türhüter*. In “Der Landarzt” the doctor is sped to the side of a patient who has no need of such a worldly avenue to faith as psychoanalysis provides.

The doctor’s arrival at the patient’s bedside marks a symbolic as well as a narrative turning-point. The night bell has summoned the doctor not only to a night call, but to the solution of a series of problems. The initial problems were hard — how to find transportation (faith), how to use his transportation to get to his destination, even how to leave Rosa to the groom. But, as the doctor declares, in such cases the gods send help. Till now, in fact, his problems have been solved by outside aid. Now, however, he is confronted with a problem — a patient — that is supposedly within his competence, and the unearthly help is missing. As we shall see, the doctor cannot solve his problem and, indeed, he cannot even identify it. He is, at best, impotently aware of it.

The thought of Rosa comes to the doctor again; recurrence is a dream characteristic. The supernatural horses push the window open and look in. The doctor feels almost as if they were summoning him to leave. He senses that nothing will be served by his remaining here, since the exposure of the patient to the corrupting influence of the world is inevitable without his acting as the procurer. The reference to the “engen Denkkreis des Alten [the boy’s father]” reflects Kafka’s strife with his own father. A blood-soaked towel is fluttered by the sister, as the doctor’s thoughts continue to dwell on Rosa. This not only calls the doctor’s attention to the problem at hand, the boy’s sore. It epitomizes Kafka’s

disgust with sex and, here, the doctor's sex-directed thoughts of Rosa.

The boy's mother prevails upon the doctor to stay. He does so, though it would be better if he left. One of the horses whinnies loudly at the doctor's surrender. (In despair or triumph?) "Was tue ich hier?" asks the doctor, as he thinks of the ingratitude of a faithless age. Further, he reflects, if it had chanced that only pigs were to be found in his pig-pen, he would have been obliged to drive here with them. That is, if man were unwilling to suffer the dictates of an incomprehensible God, then he would have to have recourse to the opinions of Gentiles and apostates, who, along with Freud, may hold that religion is an aberration and an illusion.

The family insists something is wrong with the patient. It turns out that he has a sore, which is the visual sign of his faith,¹⁰ and the color of the sore, rose, is, as commonly in dreams, the visual representation of a proper name. The family is happy at the doctor's activity; probably not because the wound can be cured, but because it is fatal, and with the death of the patient the family's shame will end. We are reminded of the Samsa family in "Die Verwandlung."

"Wirst du mich retten?" asks the patient. This does not contradict the earlier "Laß mich sterben." This saving, like that of Anfortas, has nothing to do with the regaining of health. We should not expect the patient to be concerned with that sort of salvation, any more than was Kafka, with his feeling of disgust for the human body. The thwarting of the boy's death-wish would be awkward, as we see in "Der Jäger Gracchus." Unfortunately, however, the doctor, whose own faith has already needed unnatural bolstering, lacks sufficient faith to interpret the patient's question in the patient's frame of reference. Instead, the doctor's own person and predilections play the main role in his interpretation. This is an exaggeration of a danger which Freud himself early recognized as present in the psychoanalytic method. Kafka's country doctor resents the encroachment of the psychoanalytic method in areas formerly served by the priest or rabbi, and by faith: "Den alten Glauben haben sie verloren." Thus a source of the doctor's neurosis: he is at once the opponent and the agent of the new tendency.

A school choir and a teacher, who have intruded, sing: "Und heilt er nicht, so tötet ihn!" The healing they require is primarily that of the family's shame, not that of the boy's body. Then the doctor undresses and goes to bed with the boy. This is doubtless a bitter travesty of the personal relationships of the psychoanalytic method, and, quite likely, of its furniture. Aside from this, I think the scene is in its own right a multiple symbol such as Freud finds in dreams. First, there is

¹⁰ Cf. Bense, p. 56: "Sofern . . . Krankheit und Kranke zu Metaphern und Emblemen werden, verwandeln sie sich bereits in fundamentallogische Explicite, in klinische Existenzialen und fungieren nicht mehr als bloße feststellbare Attribute im klassischen Sinne."

the widespread folkloristic motif of the physician's climbing into bed with his patient to effect a healing, not unmixed with lechery. Second, there is the Kafkan theme of getting to the very essence of God.¹¹ Third, there is the unexpressed desire of the doctor to be a patient, to return to the time when someone — his mother — looked after *him*. The Oedipus aspect is obvious.

The boy, the creature of faith, says to the doctor, the creature of psychoanalysis: "Mein Vertrauen zu dir ist sehr gering." The doctor's ineffective rejoinder is: "Bin ich aber Arzt." He is still fighting himself in refusing to see, or in being unable to see clearly, that a doctor is precisely what is *not* needed.¹² Then the doctor, in minimizing the boy's wound,¹³ concludes with this remarkable metaphor: "Im spitzen Winkel mit zwei Hieben der Hacke geschaffen. Viele bieten ihre Seite an und hören kaum die Hacke im Forst." The Freudian dream symbols, *Winkel*, *hieben*, *Hacke*, and *Forst*, are sufficiently clear without further comment.

The patient dead, the doctor must think of his own salvation. But his ludicrous return trip, naked and exposed to the storm, with supernatural horses hitched to his earthly wagon, reins trailing and fur coat flying by the sleeve from a hook on the swaying gig, is a description of the incongruous and the pathetic in man's striving. From behind echoes the verse sung by the children: "Freuet euch, ihr Patienten / Der Arzt ist euch ins Bett gelegen." This is another reference to the false salvation in the psychoanalytic method. "Freuet" may well be a bitter pun.¹⁴

The doctor's trip home is wild, but it is endlessly slow, in contrast with the speedy, direct trip to the patient. The horses pull as if they were old men. (A simple, final summation of the dominant and pervading simile between animals and men.) There is no compression of time in this phase of the dream, and the cause seems clear. The id is delaying the return of the censor, which will put an end to the double's orgy with Rosa.

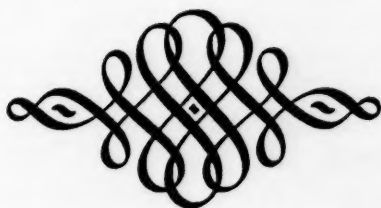
¹¹ Brod quotes Kafka in *Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre*, p. 17: "Vor dem Betreten des Allerheiligsten mußt du die Schuhe ausziehen, aber nicht nur die Schuhe, sondern alles, Reisekleid und Gepäck, und darunter die Nacktheit, und alles, was unter der Nacktheit ist, und alles, was sich unter dieses verbirgt, und dann den Kern und den Kern des Kernes." In terms of Kierkegaard this passage would mean a return to God and to the time when faith in him was strong enough.

¹² Bense, p. 85: "Die Äußerung des Landarztes zu dem Kranken: 'Junger Freund, dein Fehler ist: Du hast keinen Überblick . . . ' schlägt auf ihn selber zurück." Hence the doctor's failure to perceive genuine faith.

¹³ In his ironic exaggeration, Kafka approaches the stock literary misinterpretation of Freud in the United States in the twenties: be dissolute, be unrepressed, and your neuroses will be healed. The patient in "Der Landarzt" doubts to the end the efficacy of such methods.

¹⁴ Kafka's inclination to word-play is shown in the name "Samsa," an algebraic equivalent of the name "Kafka." To be sure, Kafka denies that "Samsa" is a cryptogram of his name; see Gustav Janouch, *Conversations with Kafka*, trans. Goronwy Rees (London, 1953), p. 46. But see also Janouch, pp. 103-104.

The poor doctor laments the loss of his prosperous practice. His world is in collapse. "In meinem Hause wütet der ekle Pferde knecht"; that is, the doctor's double is rampant, since the doctor has forfeited his own little bit of faith, and that part of him which had faith no longer lives. "Rosa ist sein [the groom's] Opfer." But it is just that the doctor-groom has changed. Kafka has not. Using symbology that is susceptible to Freudian interpretation, Kafka, in "Der Landarzt," is anti-sex and anti-love, and, both by inference and by statement, anti-Freud. "Nackt, dem Froste dieses unglücklichsten Zeitalters ausgesetzt" is the cry of the victim, the doctor, the psychoanalyst to whom other victims turn, the cry to a merciless, ungrateful age, which seeks salvation by paths other than those of difficult faith. But "nackt" is the beginning as well as the end, and there may be the slight glimmer of another chance, and then, very likely, another *Scheiterung*.



AMERICAN GOETHE SOCIETY

The Goethe Society of Baltimore and the Goethe Society of Washington (founded in 1931 as the "Goethe Society of Maryland and the District of Columbia") have merged under the common name American Goethe Society, Baltimore Chapter and Washington Chapter. Both chapters will remain independent organizations and will continue to coordinate their programs of lectures. At the present time, Professor William H. McClain is president of the Baltimore Chapter and Professor Wolfgang S. Seiferth of the Washington Chapter. The new name opens up possibilities for the founding of new chapters in other American cities. Such chapters could easily affiliate themselves with the reorganized nationwide organization and still preserve the greatest possible degree of local autonomy. Constitution and by-laws of the organization may be obtained from the presidents.

The program during the academic year 1956/57 included the following lectures: Wolfgang S. Seiferth (Howard), "A Study of Goethe's Mephistopheles" (B,W); Harry W. Pfund (Haverford), "The Main Aspects of Goethe's Interest in America" (B,W); Harold S. Jantz (Johns Hopkins), "America in German Thought and Literature" (B,W); Karl J. Arndt (Clark), "Postl als amerikanischer Dichter" (B); Hugo Müller (Georgetown), "Elisabeth Langgässers Roman *Das unauslöschliche Siegel*" (B,W); Reinhold Hoffmann (Georgetown), "*Krieg und Frieden* als Vorläufer der Krise in Tolstois Leben" (B,W); C. F. Wilhelm Behl (München), "Der Einzelne und die Masse im Werke Gerhart Hauptmanns" (W). The Baltimore Chapter also presented a *Liederabend* with Ilse Krause of the Peabody Institute, the Washington Chapter a *Rezitationsabend* with Paul Mederow, a renowned German actor who recited from the the classics in German prose and poetry.

For the previous report on the activities of the two societies cf. *Monatshefte*, XLVIII (1956), 281-282.

-D. C.

BERT BRECHT'S "DREIGROSCHENOPER" AND VILLON'S "TESTAMENT"

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The merits of *Die Dreigroschenoper* have been perhaps no less obscured by uncritical admiration than by the righteous vilification to which it has occasionally been subjected. Defended in general terms by such critics as Bentley, Mayer, and Wintzen, it has been little studied in particulars. The present note aims to discuss an aspect of the opera less imposing than its English provenience,¹ but perhaps no less curious in a consideration of its dramatic technique. This is its exploitation of certain elements of the poetry of François Villon. Once Brecht's debt to his French predecessor has been generally assessed, some evaluation of its significance may be attempted.

There is no need to draw up a concordance of themes in the works of the two poets, nor even to become involved in the complexities of Marxian dialectics, to be able to single out that note which must have appealed most to Brecht in Villon. The French poet was both an outlaw and a poet of crime. This fact was essential to the elaboration of Brecht's Macheath. At the same time, Villon was an impulsive criminal, not fundamentally antisocial, subject even to deplorable lapses into conventional moral and religious attitudes (from the Marxist point of view). Some such inverted recidivism was also to be seen in the crude formulations of what might be called Villon's political thought. If it existed at all beyond the level of personal grievances and rancor, it had to be considered as pre-political, transformed and stiffened into doctrine and even dogma. That much of Villon's text lends itself to these purposes is not to be denied; that Brecht so treated it, and did this consistently, remains to be demonstrated.

The poems of Villon in question, to cite only those of which Brecht made major adaptations, are: "Ballade des dames du temps jadis" (the presence of which has not been recognized in *Die Dreigroschenoper*), "Ballade de la Grosse Margot," "Les Contrediz de Franc Gontier," "Double ballade des folles amours," "Epistre en forme de ballade," "Tetrastique," "Epitaphe en forme de ballade," and "Ballade de mercy."²

Brecht's use of this material cannot be fully understood without

¹ See Cécilie Tolksdorf, *John Gays "Beggars Opera" und Bert Brechts "Dreigroschenoper"* (diss. Bonn, 1934).

² All citations from Villon are to the *Oeuvres*, ed. Louis Thuasne, 3 vols. (Paris, 1923), as follows: I, pp. 189-190, 246-248, 241-242, 203-205, 283-284, 290, 290-292, and 263-265. For the most part, Brecht utilized K. L. Ammer's German translation of Villon, cited here from *Balladen* (Berlin, 1930) Neuausgabe. The corresponding pages of this translation are: 49-50, 99, 92-93, 61, 25, 27, 28, 115. The text of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and of Brecht's critical comments will be cited from *Stücke*, volume III (*Stücke für das Theater am Schiffbauerdamm: 1927-1933*) (Berlin, 1955).

reference to the dramatic techniques with which he was experimenting in the late twenties and early thirties, a number of procedures which were later to crystallize in his theory of the "Epic Theater."³ In the case of each adaptation we find that Brecht has produced, where one did not already exist, an intentional disparity between form, theme, or illusion on the one hand, and subject, content, or reality on the other. He does this ordinarily by injecting a biological, economic, or sociological note into the framework of a conventional lyric. The attention focussed upon the songs by means of such internal discords, as well as by external theatrical devices, produces the celebrated *Verfremdungseffekt*.

Villon's melancholy meditation upon the evanescence and the futility of human life will best be remembered in the "Ballade des dames du temps jadis." The formal architecture of this poem incorporates a sequence of names with various forms of the "Ubi sunt" question, followed by what is perhaps the most familiar refrain in literature, "Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?". Brecht takes this poem out of the context of the *memento mori*, transforms its significance radically, but retains its movement and basic structural pattern when he writes "Die Moritat von Mackie Messer" (pp. 7-9). This song is the *Vorspiel* of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, establishing Brecht's premise of social misery founded upon economic exploitation. Villon's unanswerable question is answered, in Brecht's fashion, in every stanza of the "Moritat." Death is not the undiscovered country about which one neither knows nor must ask, for death is not the real subject of the poem. Instead, Brecht transfers our attention to the undetected murderer who "knows nothing" and whom no one questions. Villon's "Ou est" formula occurs only once: "Wo ist Alfons Glite, der Fuhrherr? / Kommt das je ans Sonnenlicht?", but then only to be answered with an ironically false profession, which is the equivalent of the French refrain: "Wer es immer wissen könnte — / Mackie Messer weiß es nicht." Other examples of this equation in the "Moritat" are: "Und sein Geld hat Mackie Messer / Dem man nichts beweisen kann," and "In der Menge Mackie Messer, den / Man nicht fragt und der nichts weiß." Such statements, by their insistence upon innocence, proclaim guilt:

Jenny Towler ward gefunden
Mit 'nem Messer in der Brust
Und am Kai geht Mackie Messer
Der von allem nichts gewußt.

The German poem thus resolves itself into a litany of crimes, but it is also to be interpreted as a recital of social iniquities. If Brecht's work,

³ On the "Epic Theater," a discussion of which does not come within the scope of this paper, see Brecht, "Anmerkungen zur Oper *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*" in *Stücke*, III, 259-276, and "Kleines Organon für das Theater" in *Sinn und Form, Sonderheft Bertolt Brecht* (Potsdam, 1949); Michel Habart, "Bert Brecht et le théâtre épique," in *Critique*, décembre, 1953; Anon. "Was ist das epische Theater?" in *Maß und Wert*, II, July-August, 1939, Number 6, pp. 831-841; Eric Bentley, "What is Epic Theater," *Accent*, VI, Winter 1946, Number 2, pp. 110-124.

like Gay's, is to be considered parodistic in its reduction of noble stations to humble, this reduction is parallel and necessary to his shift from the high moral domain of the psalmist to a socio-economic caricature of the laissez-faire capitalist as criminal⁴ (note the wearing of gloves, the burning of tenements, etc.). As Job's question may be detected in or read into Villon's ballad, so can there be posited in Brecht's something like the denunciations of *The Communist Manifesto*.

A few brief comments will serve to indicate the operation of similar mechanics in the other poems cited. If "Die Moritat von Mackie Messer" is a controlled adaptation of "La Ballade des dames du temps jadis," Brecht's "Zuhälterballade" (Act II, Scene ii, pp. 78-80), without being a transcription of Ammer's translation, is little more than a German version of "La Ballade de la Grosse Margot." This is so because Brecht finds already in Villon's poem the ironic equilibrium which he was obliged to restore in the "Moritat." Villon's brothel-piece is so clearly a parody of the conventional love lyric that it can be left intact.⁵ The music of Kurt Weill, moreover, sets unmistakably the tone of vulgar sentimentality, a tone which finds its echo in the nostalgic reminiscences of Brecht's fancy man.

This representation of brute human degradation moves onto a more conscious and active level in "Die Ballade vom angenehmen Leben" (pp. 84-85) and "Der Salomo-Song" (pp. 115-116). The first, inspired by "Les Contrediz de Franc Gontier," can scarcely be called an imitation of it. Brecht utilizes the French refrain in a variation of Ammer's translation ("Il n'est tresor que de vivre a son aise": "Nur wer im Wohlstand lebt, lebt angenehm!"), thus indicating a community of theme, but largely abandons the specific content of Villon's ballad. He does this because he chooses to transform Villon's note of lamentation into a note of protest, injecting a political undertone and an economic critique only present by implication in his model into the *Ballade*: "Was hilft da Freiheit? Es ist nicht bequem." The context of a late medieval dispute over the joys of an agrestic if virtuous life being manifestly unsuitable to the mood of Berlin in 1927, a jibe at the intellectual who writes for a bourgeois public is substituted. Brecht returns to the theme of economic necessity in "Das Zweite Dreigroschen-Finale" (p. 99), where we would

⁴ The transparent image of the shark (*Haifisch* is probably an anglicism) contributes to this identification. It may have been suggested by *The Beggar's Opera* (Act III, Scene ii). Brecht uses it in similar fashion in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Act I, Scene ii) (*Stücke*, III, 173), which was composed the same year. Another adaptation of Villon's ballad is Brecht's "Nannas Lied" or "Lied des Freudenmädchens," which also owes much to "Les Regrets de la belle Heaulmiere," but offers the refrain, "Wo sind die Tränen von gestern Abend? / Wo ist der Schnee vom vergangenen Jahr?" See *Hundert Gedichte* (1918-1950) (Berlin, 1953), pp. 19-20.

⁵ See Italo Siciliano, *François Villon et les thèmes poétiques du moyen âge* (Paris, 1934), pp. 397-406.

see in the famous line "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral" an echo of Villon's "Car de la panse vient la danse."⁶

The critique of traditional morality is undertaken in "Der Salomo-Song" (pp. 115-116), which is a close reworking of Villon's "Double Ballade des folles amours." Again retaining the structural pattern of the original, Brecht broadens its thematic implications considerably. Whereas Villon voices a lover's complaint of the misfortunes engendered by passion, citing a lengthy historical catalogue of such instances, Brecht's litany of fruitless virtues and qualities includes: "die Weisheit," "die Schönheit," "die Kühnheit," "der Wissensdurst," "die Sinnlichkeit." To each of these, Brecht subjoins Ammer's translation of the refrain "Bien est heureux, qui rien n'y a": "Beneidenswert, wer frei davon!" Villon's *ballade* fits properly into the framework of traditional morality. Brecht declares that this moral code is no longer applicable.

Scene III of Act III of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, climax and dénouement of the piece, contains in quick succession three *Songs* inspired by Villon. Macheath's plea for help, beginning "Nun hört die Stimme, die um Mitleid ruft," (pp. 125, 128), is based upon "L'Epistre en forme de ballade à ses amis." The corresponding refrains are: "Le lesserez la, le poure Villon?" and "Wollt ihr, daß seine Marter ewig währt?" This piece presents directly for the first time the appeal for compassion, a theme prepared so grotesquely in the first act by Peachum: "Es muß etwas neues geschehen. Mein Geschäft ist es, das menschliche Mitleid zu erwecken. Es gibt einige wenige Dinge, die den Menschen erschüttern, einige wenige, aber das Schlimme ist, daß sie, mehrmals angewendet, schon nicht mehr wirken" (pp. 10-11). The burlesque quatrain (*Tetrastique*) which Villon is supposed to have composed shortly before he was to be hanged is transcribed, with minor variations, from Ammer's version:

Hier hängt Macheath, der keine Laus gekränkt.
Ein falscher Freund hat ihn am Bein gekriegt.
An einen klafferlangen Strick gehängt
Spürt er am Hals, wie schwer sein Hintern wiegt (p. 132).

Here the impertinent, flippant tone of the original is precisely the effect desired. By its very nature, the burlesque epitaph calls attention to "The Inadequacy of Man's Higher Nature."

"Die Ballade, in der Macheath jedermann Abbitte leistet" (pp. 136-138) is the last song of the opera, apart from its final chorus. Brecht's poem presents a contamination of two originals, "L'Epitaphe en forme de ballade," and "Ballade de mercy." The first piece begins with an appeal for pity, but each stanza opens out in the refrain onto a larger sentiment: "Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre." Brecht makes use of these, and of the most significant portions of the "Epitaphe."

⁶ Cf. *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, in *Stücke*, III, pp. 212, 234: "Erstens, vergeß nicht, kommt das Fressen / Zweitens kommt der Liebesakt."

Of the "Ballade de mercy," omitting the appeal for forgiveness, he retains principally this statement regarding the police:

Man schlage ihnen ihre Fressen
Mit schweren Eisenhämmern ein.
Im übrigen will ich vergessen
Und bitte sie, mir zu verzeihn.

Brecht thus goes further than the combination of earthy pathos and coarse anger displayed in the "Ballade de mercy" alone — it is precisely this expression of anger that he appends to Villon's appeal for universal brotherhood, elevated and, as it were, disembodied, voiced through the corpses of those hanged. Brecht would seem to be saying here that the bourgeois bandit, no less than the proletarian, can fall victim to the tyranny which he has created. The note of revolt sounded presents thus no inconsistency in the portrayal of Macheath, who is now victim, not exploiter or "shark." The dénouement, however, redresses this miscarriage of justice: by royal decree the bourgeois bandit achieves final recognition as a (robber) baron.

Brecht's treatment of the poems cited would seem scarcely to lend itself to an accusation of servility or of plagiarism on his part. But such accusations have repeatedly been made. Cäcilie Tolksdorf, for example, while stressing the poet's great gifts, has written:

Es ist darum nur zu bedauern, daß Brecht einige seiner Balladen kritiklos von dem großen Vorläufer im Geiste, von François Villon, übernahm. Sobald er nicht mehr seine eigene urtümliche Gestaltungskraft einsetzt, seine Kunst nicht mehr freies Auswirken eines Erlebens ist, versandet sie trostlos in Partei und Tendenz und meint nur noch Programm, nicht mehr Kunst. Dann verfällt Brecht ganz dem russischen Kommunismus, und seine Dichtung wird banal, die suggestive Kraft seines Wortes bleibt ohne Widerhall. (op. cit., p. 57)

In this matter, Fräulein Tolksdorf was either unwilling or unable to accept the work on its own grounds. These are to be sought neither in a romantic (some might say bourgeois) conception of originality as free expression of the subjective, nor in any form of rigid neo-classicism (some might say literary Marxism) which demands self-immolation to the letter of a creed. The grounds of the work are neither lyric nor didactic, but "Epic" and expository. The ballads are not to be judged as isolated works of art, but as foci of attention in which the action and the political themes of the opera are summarized and "highlighted." Let us not forget that they are sung on a stage illuminated with golden light, and that their titles are displayed to the audience on a board or screen. The old form of the "Moritat" itself, with its placard presenting the fatal instruments of the object lesson in question constitutes an interposition or objectification.

This fragmentation of the drama may suggest, to be sure, the view of a "bent world," but more to the point, in the psycho-literary sphere,

is Brecht's insistence that the work shall not constitute an overpowering whole, a kind of magical, imperialistic aggression upon the sensibility of the spectator. As the author himself has proclaimed, the movement of his drama is not to be described as "Wachstum," but as "Montage."⁷ In no case does the ballad carry forward or incorporate the dramatic action within itself; in every case it illuminates and synthesizes it. The play of irony in each song inhibits the spectator's emotional involvement, but provokes his intellectual scrutiny, leading him thus to a kind of political commitment. It is unimportant that the spectator may be unaware of the literary ironies due to Villon's presence in the German ballad (Brecht proclaims his source once or twice), or he may not grasp the underlying dialectical progression from a proclamation of economic misery to the appeal for a revolution of universal brotherhood. But he can scarcely fail to note a tissue of successive disparities between action and word, nor be insensible to the moralistic discords which culminate so ironically in the dénouement.

It is thus not merely in the work of selection and adaptation that we can see evidence of Brecht's originality, but in his incorporation of the ballads in a sequence illustrative of the action, in a total synthesis the effect of which is dialectic and diagnostic, not didactic or cathartic. Literarily speaking, the accusation of servility cannot be sustained, however much Brecht's thought may have been linked with that of a political program.

⁷ "Anmerkungen zur Oper *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, (Stücke III, 267).

NEWS AND NOTES

CHARLES M. PURIN

Am 18. September dieses Jahres verschied im Alter von 85 Jahren in Milwaukee Charles M. Purin, emeritierter Professor der Staatsuniversität Wisconsin. Mit ihm verlieren Lehrer und Freunde des neu-sprachlichen Unterrichts an den Schulen und Colleges unseres Landes, und besonders die Lehrer des Deutschen, eine Persönlichkeit, deren weites Ausmaß an Begabung des Geistes wie des Herzens allen jenen unvergeßlich bleiben wird, die ihm persönlich begegnen durften oder die aus seinen Bemühungen zur Förderung des Sprachunterrichts Gewinn zogen. In allen beruflichen Versammlungen, besonders in denen der zwanziger und dreißiger Jahre, war Professor Purin eine bekannte Persönlichkeit, die, sei es in den Debatten, als Vorsitzender einer Gruppe, oder als Mitglied eines Komitees, in seiner ruhigen nie verletzenden Art hinzufügend, richtig stellend, oder aus dem Reichtum seiner persönlichen Erfahrungen als Fachmann auf dem Gebiete des neu-sprachlichen Unterrichts beiträgend, immer anregend und belebend zu wirken verstand und immer den Respekt und das Vertrauen seiner Berufsgenossen besaß.

Geboren am 14. August 1872 in Riga, kam er als Zwanzigjähriger nach Amerika und erwarb an der Staatsuniversität Wisconsin den BA, den MA und 1913 die Doktorwürde. Seine berufliche Tätigkeit begann an der *University School* in Milwaukee, führte ihn über *East Division High School* in Milwaukee als *Instructor*, *Assistant Professor* und *Associate Professor* an die Staatsuniversität nach Madison und nach einigen Jahren als *Associate Professor* an die Staatsuniversität Texas nach Austin. Von Texas nach Milwaukee zurückgekehrt, bekleidete er mehrere Jahre lang die Stellung des *Head of the College Division of the Wisconsin State Normal School at Milwaukee*. Von hier aus folgte er einem Rufe als *Associate Professor* an das Hunter College in New York, kehrte aber im Jahre 1927 nochmals nach Milwaukee zurück, wo er bis zu seiner Emeritierung 1942 als Direktor der *Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee* tätig war. Einige Jahre lang bekleidete er noch die Stellung des Instruktors für Deutsch und Russisch an der *Castle Heights Military Academy* in Lebanon, Tennessee, und beschloß seine Lehrtätigkeit an der Stätte, wo er sie einst begonnen, als Deutschlehrer an der *Milwaukee University School*.

Groß ist die Zahl seiner Veröffentlichungen auf dem Gebiete des neu-sprachlichen Unterrichts in den Fachzeitschriften unseres Landes. Nur eins von seinen Büchern, worunter verschiedene Textausgaben sind, soll hier erwähnt werden, ein kleines Bändchen, erschienen 1937, auf das auch heute noch Herausgeber von deutschen Grammatiken für Anfänger Bezug nehmen, und an der sie auch in der Zukunft nicht werden vorübergehen können: *A Standard German Vocabulary*. Mit den *Monatsheften* hat Professor Purin viele Jahre lang in engster Verbindung gestanden, erst als Mitherausgeber und dann bis 1942 als Mitglied des

Redaktionskomitees. Bei Gelegenheit seines Rücktritts aus dem Lehredienst gaben die *Monatshefte* eine besondere *Purin-Festnummer* heraus, die auf ihrer Schlußseite Leben und Wesen des nun Verstorbenen mit den Worten Goethes charakterisierte:

Weite Welt und breites Leben,
 Langer Jahre redlich Streben,
 Stets geforscht und stets gegründet,
 Nie geschlossen, oft geründet,
 Ältestes bewahrt mit Treue,
 Freundlich aufgefaßtes Neue,
 Heitern Sinn und reine Zwecke:
 Nun! man kommt wohl eine Strecke.

University of Wisconsin.

— R. O. R.

BOOK REVIEWS

Das Nibelungenlied. Entstehung und Gestalt.

Von Friedrich Panzer. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1955. 496 Seiten.

This important book is the most recent comprehensive study of the *Nibelungenlied*. In a foreword Panzer states that his preoccupation is above all with the text as we have it rather than with the reconstruction of possible earlier poems, and he explains in what decisive respects his views differ from those of Heusler. The first chapter contains a critical history of significant research done on the *Nibelungenlied* from the eighteenth century to the present day. The second and third chapters present a discussion of the relationship of the *Nibelungenlied* manuscripts to one another and the relationship of the *Klage* to manuscript group C*.

Among the remaining chapters the most significant are chapter six, which deals with style and inner form, a subject to which too little attention has been paid hitherto, and chapter eight, devoted to the sources of the *Nibelungenlied*. Here, in the controversial portion of the book, Panzer's findings are in three respects at variance with generally accepted views. In the first place Panzer rejects those theories according to which Sivrit reflects a historical personage, maintaining that this figure can be satisfactorily explained only by assuming its origin in the fairy tale. Secondly Panzer believes that numerous passages in the *Nibelungenlied* are directly borrowed from Old French literature, notably the *chansons de geste*. In the third place Panzer's view of the relationship between the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Thidrekssaga* is diametrically opposed to that of Heusler, since he is convinced that the writer of the *Thidrekssaga* relied not on earlier, vanished versions of the Nibelung material, but on the epic itself as we know it.

The two last of these theories were developed by Panzer in detail in *Studien zum Nibelungenliede*, 1945. In a review of these studies

(*Euphorion*, 45, p. 493-498) Hermann Schneider refuted Panzer's arguments while giving him at least credit for having undermined conclusively the authority hitherto enjoyed by the writer of the *Thidrekssaga*. Aware of Hermann Schneider's views, Panzer nevertheless holds his ground in the present book. In numerous parallels between the *Nibelungenlied* and French literature he refuses to see merely accidental recurrences of prevalent motifs, as Schneider would have it, but is convinced that direct borrowing must have taken place. The reviewer confesses a feeling of uncertainty. On the one hand such an extended parallel as is shown to exist between the *Nibelungenlied* and the Old French *Renaus* can scarcely be dismissed as fortuitous. On the other hand however, Panzer's assertion that in describing Sîvrit's death the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* used ideas and phrases which he could have drawn only from the Old French *Chanson de Roland* must be received with considerable scepticism.

In the matter of the *Thidrekssaga* Panzer concedes that certain portions of the *Nibelungenlied*, notably the Ortliep scene, cannot have served as the saga writer's source. He contends however, that the differences in the two versions of the Ortliep scene show merely that the saga writer probably used other sources in addition to the *Nibelungenlied*. In further instances where the two works do not accord, Panzer assumes the *Nibelungenlied* to be the original and seeks an explanation for the changes presumed to have been made by the writer of the saga. The wild boar of the *Nibelungenlied*, for example, killed by Sîvrit on his last hunting expedition and not mentioned again in the poem, is used by the saga writer not only for the hunt, where it is killed by Högni, but once more in the scene in which the murderer is confronted with the widow. The reason for this, says Panzer, is because the saga writer perhaps failed to understand the exclusively West Germanic word *schâchaere* which he found in the *Nibelungenlied*, and because he possibly wished to make his account harmonize with the contents of Kriemhilt's dream (921). It so happens that the Provençal epic *Daurel et Beton* also tells of a murderer who claimed that his victim had been killed by a wild boar, and Panzer's treatment of this fact is a commentary on the type of inconsistency to which his method can lead. While suggesting no explanation of the *schâchaere* of the *Nibelungenlied*, Panzer is convinced that the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* was influenced by *Daurel et Beton*; at the same time however, he rejects the idea of any connection between the Provençal epic and the *Thidrekssaga*, even though the wild boar motif is common to both.

It must be repeated that Panzer's book is important. The author's controversial arguments, supported as they are by a wealth of material drawn from many sources, cannot but stimulate efforts to arrive at an ever more valid estimate of the *Nibelungenlied*. Although unfortunately not free from the misprints which mar too many books coming from Germany today, the volume is well made and very attractively bound.

University of Wisconsin.

—Lida Kirchberger

Friedrich Nietzsche. Der Weg zum Nichts

Von Hans M. Wolff. Bern: A. Francke Verlag, 1956 = *Sammlung Dalp*, Bd. 83. 309 S. Preis: Fr. 11.80.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading: it may induce the reader to expect a biography of Nietzsche, whereas the book is actually an epistemological investigation. Dr. Wolff's aim is "Nietzsches Denken als 'unwillkürliche Biographie seiner Seele' zu verstehen und die 'leidenschaftliche Seelen-Geschichte' seiner Entwicklung nachzuzeichnen" (p. 7). In tracing Nietzsche's spiritual development Dr. Wolff makes only the scantiest references to biographical facts. He also chooses to disregard Nietzsche's ideas about art, culture, politics, sociology, women, love, religion, and ethics and concentrates instead upon one basic problem: the relationship between "Leben" and "Geist," between instinct and intellect, with the allied epistemological problem of how the intellect, dominated by the obscure impulses of the subconscious, is capable of knowing the truth. Dr. Wolff uses the chronological approach, beginning with Nietzsche's schoolboy essays at the Pforta and ending with *Der Wille zur Macht*, and liberally documents his study with quotations from Nietzsche's works and letters. He shows very effectively how Nietzsche struggled against the inevitable nihilism of his philosophy: how he modified his views, abandoned ideas and then resurrected them, until he was finally forced to conclude that the subconscious "Wille zur Macht" governed every human faculty, and that it was impossible for the intellect to know more than an illusory, perspective truth about anything, even about the inner self. Thinking, in the final philosophy of Nietzsche, is "nicht eine freie, sich selbst entsprungene Aktivität, sondern ein Verhalten der Triebe zueinander" (p. 263). When the individual, who cannot even consider himself an entity amid the universal flux ("Werden"), becomes fully conscious of the illusory nature of everything, he will suffer in his impotence and answer "Umsonst" to all human hope and endeavor.

In his final chapter Dr. Wolff makes considerable use of biographical information as he tries to demonstrate how Nietzsche suffered under the nihilistic outcome of his philosophical dreams. He claims, too, that Nietzsche's intermittent periods of "Heiterkeit" in 1888 are evidence of the euphoria of madness. To me it seems equally reasonable to assume that Nietzsche's profound melancholy was more pathological than philosophical.

Dr. Wolff follows a dubious procedure in completely ignoring the wealth of critical literature on Nietzsche, although he admits that he owes much to it (p. 8). He justifies this neglect by saying that the value of a study like his must depend upon "seiner inneren Konsequenz und dem Einklang mit dem Werk des Autors," and that no useful purpose would be served by fighting against divergent views of other critics. Although Dr. Wolff is very thorough and convincing in most of this investigation, he does make use of conjecture and implication now and then when he can find no definite statement by Nietzsche on a certain issue. His book may therefore cause controversy anyhow. Furthermore, some critics might consider *Der Wille zur Macht* (which was compiled

by Nietzsche's sister) to be a less reliable guide to Nietzsche's final opinions than Dr. Wolff believes it is.

When at the beginning of his book Dr. Wolff speaks of a "leidenschaftliche Seelen-Geschichte," he suggests something more interesting than he has really written. It is amazing how an exciting philosopher like Nietzsche can inspire such dull books. When Dr. Wolff disregards ideas on culture, love, religion, ethics, and so forth, he automatically eliminates the most colorful and stimulating aspects of Nietzsche's thought. To most readers such ideas *are* Nietzsche, even if professional philosophers may be more fascinated by his epistemology.

West Virginia University.

—Victor J. Lemke

My Two Worlds. An Autobiography.

By Nora Wydenbruck. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956. 200 pages. Price: 21 shillings.

The two worlds which have furnished the stage setting for Nora Wydenbruck's dramatic life guarantee by virtue of their uniqueness and their polarity an excellent story: her first world is that of her childhood and youth, the old Austria of Franz Joseph, the pre-war glamor of which is described with a kind of nostalgic humor by this daughter of the Counts of Wydenbruck, who belonged to the oldest nobility of Saxon origin — possibly to the house of Charlemagne's enemy Widukind — and eventually lived in Carinthia. A certain satirical vein comes to the fore, and on occasion the reader will be reminded of the late Hermynia Zur Mühlen, Countess Wydenbruck's "Standesgenossin." The author's mother was of much more "recent" origin, just a *née* Fugger von Bebenhausen, a descendent of the well-known money-lenders.

The marriage of the parents (Nora's father was a high-ranking Austrian diplomat with an intellectual and peculiar outlook on life and politics) was not happy: the young girl, born in London and later forced to learn German, spent her childhood and youth with her mother at a family chateau in Carinthia, or in winter in a hotel suite in Vienna, while her father represented his old monarch at distant courts. As an adolescent comtesse Nora goes to all the fashionable balls of Vienna; the list of the houses she frequented and to which she was related will remind the reader in part of the *Almanac de Gotha*, in part of the *dramatis personae* of Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

Nannies, governesses, and finally an *adliges Konvikt* in Dresden are charged with the education of the young countess. But a far greater education awaits her. World War I changes the lives of men, kills men, and forms men: Nora Wydenbruck meets a young, extremely talented painter, Alfons Purtscher, today famous, titled, honored. He is a friend of Rainer Maria Rilke. And while her first world dies, heroically, in terrible agony, without hope, the second world is born — again in pain and agony. Without too much resistance from the Wydenbrucks Nora enters into her marriage with Alfons Purtscher. The inflation threatens a new catastrophe; the young couple settles down in London. Purtscher paints, and his wife, now penniless, does any work she can find. The friendship of a few outstanding personalities helps and encourages the

young couple. Letters from Rilke not only form a high point in the author's life, but also in her book.

Slowly, during and after many struggles, beset by illness and frightful difficulties, the two courageous human beings again find themselves. Their life in London becomes settled: they have a home, gifted children. Their accomplishments bring them honor and respect: the husband is a famous painter, Nora Wydenbruck a well-known writer, mediating between her two languages. She translates T. S. Eliot into German and Rilke into English. Her Rilke biography is probably one of the best, if not *the* best account of the poet's life and explanation of his work.

What a wonderful book! When we close it, we feel that we have accompanied a woman wandering through her life on a road which led from grandeur to greatness, and on which she had strengthened herself with "Schalen mit rühmlichen Früchten" (Rilke).

University of Alaska.

— Robert Rie

The Saga of the Jömsvikings.

Translated from the Old Icelandic with Introduction and Notes by Lee M. Hollander. Illustr. by Malcolm Thurgood. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955. 116 pages. Price: \$3.00.

Once more Professor Hollander has favored us with a modern version of an ancient saga. This time the result has not only been happy in a scholarly sense, but has given us a charming piece of bookmaker's art. This is not one of the great sagas, but it has considerable interest for the picture it gives of that fierce band of warriors, the Jömsvikings, who established themselves on the island of Wollin in the estuary of the Oder in the tenth century. These men were essentially gangsters, but with a severe code of discipline which included abstinence from pleasures and an unflinching courage in the face of death. The climax of the saga is reached in the great battle they fought for possession of Norway in the bay of Hjörungavåg in western Norway in 985 or 986. They lost against Hákon Jarl, but the scene of their execution is a high point in saga art and has given the Scandinavian languages one of their standing expressions: "Not yet have all the Jömsvikings died!" The saga has never before appeared separately in English (an obscure translation from 1875 hardly counts), though much of its material was used in Snorri's *Heimskringla*, which is, of course, available. Professor Hollander has used the version found in the Stockholm Codex 7, quarto, which was proclaimed by Finnur Jónsson to be the best and probably most authentic. Even in this version the first five chapters seem extraneous to the real purpose of the saga and might well have been omitted. This reviewer has checked selected passages of the translation with the original and found nothing to criticize. The translation is both accurate and readable. The name Gunnhild is misprinted Grunnhild on page 42. In the case of two names the translator has not followed his usual principle of substituting English equivalents wherever possible but leaving the original forms of others (p. 9): Hjörung Bay should of course be Hjørunga; and Drontheim should be either Trondheim or Throndheim (it is puzzling that Hollander should have chosen this un-Scandinavian form also in Njál's Saga: is he using a German map of Norway?).

University of Wisconsin.

— Einar Haugen

Rilkes Leben und Werk im Bild.

Bearbeitet von Ingeborg Schnack. Mit einem biographischen Essay von J. K. von Salis. Insel-Verlag, 1956. 424 pages. Price: DM 30.00.

The interest in the lives of the poets is as old as the interest in poetry itself; and among the traditional biographical accounts iconographies, because of their visual appeal, have a special and perhaps even a preferred place. It is thus in response to a true demand on the part of the numerous friends of Rainer Maria Rilke that the *Insel-Verlag* has undertaken this picture book. It is beautifully bound, printed on fine paper, well edited, provided with a sensitive (but somewhat wordy) introduction in the form of a *biographie raisonnée* by J. R. von Salis, and a postscript by Ingeborg Schnack expertly explaining and defending the principles which guided her editorship of the pictorial part.

There are a few unusual features about this work which will impress themselves upon the reader, particularly if he compares the volume with such iconographies as that of Mallarmé by Henri Mondor, of Rimbaud by François Ruchon, or George by Robert Böhringer. His first realization will be that Rilke did not like to have his picture taken and that, be it cause or effect, he did not photograph well, in contrast to George who must have loved it and of whom scores of good pictures are preserved. This fact forced Miss Schnack to go about her task in an entirely different fashion. Böhringer, for example, built his book around the impressive figure of George surrounded with portraits of the many more or less photogenic youths this prophetic poet was able to attract. In the center of the *Rilke-Bilderbuch* is an abstraction, Rilke's life, running through the work like a thread onto which are strung numerous disparate graphic impressions: pictures of his ancestors and progenitors, snapshots from his infancy, childhood, and adulthood, photographs of friends and acquaintances, of women whom Rilke had loved or who had loved him, views of cities in which he had lived, hotels he had used, pages he had written, landscapes he had praised, works of art he had admired or inspired, an array going considerably beyond the more conventional type of iconography. The relationship of these pictures — which have rarely been selected, it seems, on the basis of their photographic excellence — to the poet ranges from the intimate through the appropriate to the fleeting and even tenuous. The result is a collection resembling that in a family album. This feeling is reinforced by the arrangement of the photographs. More frequently than not, two, three, and more are crowded onto one page in a variety of combinations and have to share the space with sometimes copious explanatory notes. The atmosphere thus created is one of familiarity and instructiveness rather than dignity and aesthetic enjoyment, and it is, for this reason, hard to think of the book as a definitive attempt of its kind.

Yet I do want to insist that in spite of some defects which are partly due to the nature, partly to the magnitude of the enterprise, the volume at hand is a valuable one which every Rilke lover will want to own.

Harvard University.

—Egon Schwarz

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